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RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000840

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SUBJECT: SUDAN/DARFUR: FM LAM AKOL ON EGELAND, UNPKO
ASSESSMENT

Classified By: Charge Andrew Steinfeld for reasons 1.5 (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) Charge had a brief pull-aside meeting with FM Lam Akol on the margins of the April 6 Assessment and Evaluation Commission meeting. He expressed Washington's considerable dismay over the cancellation of UN U/SYG Egeland's visit to Darfur and Khartoum, and over the expulsion of the Norwegian Refugee Council from Kalma IDP camp. Charge handed the FM a non-paper drawn from Department guidance (see para 4), which Akol said he would pass to President Bashir at a meeting later in the day.

¶2. (C) On Egeland, Akol was clearly embarrassed, noting that it was not proper to cancel such a visit at the last moment. He confirmed that he had met with Egeland both in NYC recently and in Rumbek, and expected the visit to Khartoum and Darfur to proceed. He laid the decision at the feet of the local Wali, and mentioned the Prophet's birthday and Egeland being a Norwegian as reasons for the trip's cancellation. (Note: This was clearly not the case. UN Deputy SRSG Manuel DaSilva told us April 5 that the cancellation of Egeland's visit was certainly decided at the highest levels of the GNU, as the Sudanese perm rep in NY officially communicated the cancellation to the UN there.)

UNPKO assessment: Awaiting consultations, and word from Bashir

¶3. (C) Charge also noted that the UNPKO assessment team urgently needed to travel to Darfur, but we understood Sudan was not willing to provide the green light. Akol said that the GNU was awaiting "political consultations" on the matter. To Charge's question as to whether Akol planned to travel to NYC for these consultations on the basis of U/SYG Gambari's recent invitation, Akol confirmed that he had in fact been invited, that President Bashir had accepted Akol's invitation in a meeting with Gambari, but that Bashir "has not yet told me to go."

¶4. (SBU) Non-paper passed to FM Akol:

Jan Egeland Barred From Khartoum and Darfur

-- The U.S. is deeply disturbed that Sudan's Government of National Unity denied UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland permission to travel to Khartoum and Darfur, as well as over-flight authorization en route to neighboring Chad.

-- Mr. Egeland and the humanitarian community are engaged in the desperately needed mission of ensuring assistance to more than 3.5 million people in Darfur and neighboring Chad. These people are struggling and dying from displacement, hunger, and sickness, as well as the constant threat of

violence. We support the efforts of those organizations working there in such adverse conditions.

-- We call on the Sudanese government to allow Mr. Egeland immediate access to all areas of Sudan and over-flight rights to facilitate his travel to other affected regions nearby so that he can fulfill his lifesaving responsibilities. Instead of blocking international help, the Sudanese government should be seeking every available avenue of humanitarian assistance to stop its people's suffering and dying. The Sudanese government's action sends a disturbing and ominous signal to the international community.

-- The U.S. is discussing this matter with our partners at the UN.

Norwegian Refugee Council

-- We understand that the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has pulled out of Kalma camp as its camp coordination agreement with the Sudanese government has expired and has not been renewed despite exhaustive efforts by the UN and the humanitarian community.

-- The U.S. is very concerned about this situation since the NRC is camp coordinator of Kalma camp, the largest internally displaced persons camp in Darfur and home to approximately 90,000 people.

-- The departure of the NRC will affect the monitoring and coordination of food, health, and sanitation services, as well as monitoring protection in Kalma camp.

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-- The U.S. is greatly concerned about the HAC's actions in the past, including its closure of Sudan Social Development Organization offices in West Darfur several weeks ago. We continue to call on the Sudanese government to stop obstructing delivery of humanitarian assistance across the country so as to ease the suffering of the Sudanese people.

-- We call on the Sudanese government to address immediately all obstacles to delivery of humanitarian assistance and provide protection for civilians and aide workers in the affected areas. This includes ending intrusive inspections of humanitarian vehicles, and exorbitant administrative fees and delays in the receipt of travel permits. In this regard, the U.S. urges the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and the HAC to extend the moratorium on restrictions on humanitarian activities for Darfur to ensure unfettered access by these organizations.
STEINFELD